



The 2000 Master Plan for Higher Education

What the Master Plan Means For Community and Technical Colleges

Background

Every four years, the Higher Education Coordinating Board is required by law to submit a Master Plan for higher education that represents the “broad public interest” to the Legislature and governor. Once the document is adopted by the Legislature, it becomes the state’s strategic higher education plan.

The 2000 Master Plan

The 2000 Master Plan identifies a huge challenge – meeting the needs of the 70,000 additional full-time students who will seek a college education in Washington State between 2001 and 2010. To address this explosive demand, it asks the Legislature to fund enrollment for about 52,500 of those students at public colleges and universities.

How the Plan Helps Community and Technical Colleges

Earmarks nearly 80 percent of the new lower-division enrollments for the community and technical colleges.

That’s 21,000 of the 27,000 new lower-division enrollments needed to keep pace with population growth. The Master Plan assumes that community and technical colleges will remain the largest provider of college education in the state.

Supports all sectors of higher education. The Master Plan supports a system-wide solution that includes all of the state’s community and technical colleges and baccalaureate institutions. It does not envision or support an either/ or approach to funding needs or enrollments from one sector to another.

Fully supports student financial aid. The Master Plan urges the Legislature to fund *State Need Grants* at levels that equal the resident tuition rates at Washington’s public colleges and universities, and that enable the state to continue to serve students from low-income families. It also supports increased funding for the *State Work Study* program so that more needy students can earn their way through college. In addition, it urges the Legislature to establish in law and fully fund the *Washington Promise Scholarship*, an academic scholarship for students from low- and middle-income families that is equal to about two years of community college tuition.

Supports continued affordable tuition. The Master Plan urges the Legislature to link future increases in tuition at public colleges and universities to the rate of change in state per capita personal income, which is one of the most reliable indicators of the ability of state residents to pay higher tuition costs. This likely would limit tuition increase to about 3 to 4 percent per year.

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Recognizes the two-year colleges' capital needs. One-third of the buildings in the community and technical college system are over 30 years old and over 60 percent are greater than 25 years old. Clearly, the community and technical college system will require significant ongoing capital investments to upgrade and add to their existing buildings to meet growing enrollment needs. The enrollment goals contained in the Master Plan for the community and technical colleges will require an estimated \$1.24 billion in capital financing over the next 10 years.

Offers greater flexibility to start high-demand programs. The Master Plan proposes the creation of "opportunity zones" that would allow colleges to start high-demand programs free of unnecessary institutional and state "red tape." And the Master Plan proposes that the state target enrollments to high-demand programs. The community and technical colleges were awarded 70 percent of the 500 high-demand enrollments allocated by the HECB to expand or develop new high-demand programs during 2000-2001 at public colleges and universities.

Supports the expansion of technology for faculty training and student enrollment opportunities. More college faculty would be trained to use e-learning technologies and best practices in their classrooms. In addition, a new incentive program would recognize and reward innovation and excellence in e-teaching. The HECB strongly supports the community and technical colleges' Washington On-Line program, which represents a model for all other education providers in the state.

Promotes outreach to under-served people and remote areas of the state. The HECB proposes creation of a comprehensive information source, the "HELLO Network," to reach out to people from groups that are historically under-represented in higher education and bring together all available resources to meet citizens' education needs. Community and technical colleges, located in virtually every major community in the state, are

uniquely positioned to take advantage of this new resource.

Calls for a statewide information clearing-house to coordinate and leverage industry support for higher education.¹ A central database would help colleges actively solicit private sector support and give businesses good ideas for where they could donate money and provide in-kind support. The clearinghouse would complement existing foundation efforts and stimulate new partnerships with businesses or sector groups.

Supports Running Start, College in the High School and other "alternative" programs. The HECB believes these programs increase student success in college and help students move more quickly and effectively through college, and represent significant savings to taxpayers.

What the Plan Asks Community and Technical Colleges to Do

Place the needs of student learners first. Colleges, in collaboration with students, will identify obstacles to meeting student program demand, including but not limited to barriers to the transfer of credits. The HECB will work with the community and technical colleges to analyze these obstacles, and, if warranted, recommend changes in policies, practices, and structures.

Identify the fundamental skills and knowledge required for statewide associate transfer degrees. The HECB will work with college faculty and administrators, students, employers and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to identify what students who have earned an associate degree should know and be able to do.

Make the most effective use of personnel and other resources. Community and technical colleges will be asked to continue to regularly re-evaluate highest priority functions and direct internal resources to those priorities. Resources generated through savings can be redirected to high priority needs.

¹American Electronics Association, Washington Council Higher Education Task Force; "High Technology Industry, State of Washington, 1994-1995, Washington, D.C., 1994, p. 15-16, 1995.